Dear Jim, 12/5/74

Itmis the first beautiful day in some time. No cutting winds, bright, warm sun, above-freezing temperature. And I was thinking as I took a large stack of books out to the mailbox and to bring the morning papers back how nice it would be to go for a walk.

The reasons I can't remind me of something you said yesterday, that I should finish Agent Oswald.And why I have not been able to. And what that can explain about me and how and why I react as I do.

I decided to sleep this morning until half past five because tonight's broadcast will last until midnight. People from the college are coming this afternoon. And there is Haile's memorandum into which I got before breakfast.

Not only would I like to talk a walk - I'd like to cut some wood so I can use the fireplace for heat, and today is fine for that. But there not only isn't time but I have not even had time to get the gas-oil mixture the saw requires since returning from Memphis. Before going there the weather was too mild. When Bud and Bill were here October 13 I had not even started to take the outside furniture in, we did all our discussing outside, and because one can of the mix will last the entire winter, I had to let getting the gas wait untilx the last minute to keep it from going "stale," which it does.

Small things, of course. But symptomatic.

For years I have had a low boiling point with Bud because of some of the enormous wastes of time for which he has been responsible. I could have written several books in several of the longer periods of time he has wasted. You can remember those months he kept lying to me while he kept you busy on other things instead of getting to the habeas corpus petition.

Then there was the time he asked me to help John Nichols with his first suit, which was a mess. Bud didn't take the time. In fact, he wasn't competent to do what he asked of me. It was enough for me that Bud said it should be done. I spent at least as much time on it as finishing Agent Oswald would have required. And if I'd known that Bud was lying and there would be that long delay after I returned with the material for the affidavits for the petition, while I don't know that I would have done it, I would have had time to do Tiger to Ride. More likely I'd have finished other started work instead of making a new beginning. But I would have done some writing if I'd know it would not be interrupted at some close and unpredictable moment.

Or, take the time I spent trying to frustrate what nobody else saw would result from what Cyril was up to. Or the time trying to get through to Paul on the horrendous "science" of his melonry.

Can you begin to imagine the time wasted trying to keep Garrison straight, regardless of the value of what little I was able to accomplish?

Each of these, whether correctly understood, was something I then believed required time and effort instead of what else I could have done with that time. I look back with considerable regret at the wastes but not with the belief that in being the only one who attempted to cope with these disasters and futilities the decision was wrong. I did block some bad things and I did accomplish some good ones. But there is no doubt that each represents someone else's bad judgement or other imposition. With Garrison and Wecht there is again a Bud involvement (plus the waste of a scarce commodity around here with Garrison, money).

Whether the time was required by waste or work the time was not well spent and was as I then perceived it required and was time I'd have preferred spending almost any other way. This is true of our recent experiences with Paul. I'll never know whether he would have been content to remain publicly quiet if I had not taken time and gone after him with the vigor I did. I do know that he did remain publicly silent and that the result is that I was able to accomplish much.

These wastes of time have accumulated over the years into an enormous amount, more than I think anyone can possibly imagine. In terms of what I could have done with that time the cost is great. In terms of explaining my impatience with the recurrence of similar and generally needless and unprincipled repetitions - the Playboy interview is but one of the numerous current ones - the accumulation is, I think, at least a partial explanation. And all this does to peace of mind and ability to concentrate and work productively ought be obvious. With Bud it will end with the Ray case end.